



# **Boosting Your Career Chances Through Work Shadowing and Work Experience**

A Guide to Securing the Best Placement

*thorpecareersportal.info*

## What's the point of Work Experience?

**Work Shadowing** is an informal type of work experience where you observe someone in their role to understand how they do their job. It is usually short term (a few days at most) and unpaid. It aims to provide an insight rather than hands on experience.

careers.manchester.ac.uk

**Work Experience** is essential for getting a job. In the form of a short work placement, work experience is always viewed favourably by employers and can help you decide your future career ... A placement not only enhances your knowledge and helps with your studies - it also provides an insight into a job or industry.'

prospects.ac.uk

Lots of students in the past have felt that Work Experience gave them the chance to develop their **confidence** in working with new people and unfamiliar surroundings.

A good placement will give you an **insight into the world of work**. It might give you a chance to **try out a career**; or help you to get a **part-time or Christmas job** afterwards.

Employers say that the right placement can give young people a more **competitive edge** when it comes to applying for post-16 courses, apprenticeships or jobs with training, even post-18 university and college applications.

You get to use some of the **skills** that you have developed at school in real life situations. You can use these practical experiences as examples when you are applying for post-16 opportunities.

Work Experience is a great way to develop your **transferable skills** such as communication, ICT, problem-solving and teamwork.

The **contacts** you make during Work Experience may be able to help you in the future. It is all about networking: not what you know, but who you know.

Many employers make **apprenticeship or job offers** to people who have impressed them during Work Experience placements. If you are contemplating doing an apprenticeship after Year 11, it makes lots of sense to arrange your Work Experience in an organisation that offers or might offer Apprenticeships.

Now is the time to begin to think about what you might want to do after Year 11. Some of you will apply to sixth forms or colleges, some of you will apply for apprenticeships or jobs with training. Think about how a Work Experience placement could improve your future chances.

Why not come along to an Apprenticeship Workshop after school on Thursdays in N15, 3.15pm to 5.30pm, if you have further questions about Apprenticeships or Work Experience in general?



**If students are thinking about:**

**Choosing an Apprenticeship after Year 11 then why not consider organising a placement for a few days, as this opportunity could be the 'foot in the door' that kickstarts your career?**

**Choosing a career in:**

***Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing ...  
Veterinary Science, Nursing ...  
Aeronautical, Civil, Electrical,  
Mechanical Engineering ...  
Plumbing, Carpentry,  
Bricklaying, ... Law ...  
Accountancy ... Teaching ...  
The Performing Arts (Music,  
Drama, Dance) ... Sport ...***

**... then why not consider organising a placement for a few days?**

## Students should consider clear reasons for choosing where they are applying.

*"I want to volunteer in a care home because I would like to be a nurse in the future. This would be invaluable experience of working with other people."*

*"I am choosing to apply to Radio Norwich because I am studying GCSE Media and hoping by doing Work Experience there; it'll help me with my course."*

*"I want to work at Boots, as I am interested in Retail and would like a career in Retail in the future."*

*"I am interesting in pursuing a career in Business Law and so a placement at Aviva is what I am looking for."*

*"I would like to work in a garage dealing with trucks. For that reason, I am choosing to go to Orwell Trucks where they work with Mercedes Benz."*

*"I am considering a course at Easton College working with animals after GCSEs and would eventually like to be a Veterinary Nurse, that is why I am choosing to go to the Anchorage Veterinary Hospital."*

*"I am applying to Norfolk County Council as I am interested in Civil Engineering as a future career."*

## When is the window of opportunity? What paperwork needs to be completed?

Year 11 students may wish to undertake a period of Work Experience for up to five days between **Thursday 18 October and Friday 26 October 2018**.

These dates fall within the October half-term break. The first Autumn half-term will end at lunchtime on Wednesday 17 October at 1.10pm.

By law, the school has responsibility for ensuring that all placements are safe.

We employ Norfolk County Council to undertake Health and Safety checks on our behalf.

The Placement Insurance Form should be given to the employer, once the placement has been agreed. The employer will then complete the form stating relevant health and safety information. The form will be returned to school.

This form also acts as a Consent Form and allows for parents/guardians to share their child's relevant medical conditions with employers.

The deadline for all paperwork to be received by the school is **Monday 10 September 2018**.

An early September deadline allows for any Health and Safety checks to be carried out in time for October placement dates

## Optional Summer Work Experience after GCSE Examinations

For students interested in a placements in schools, for example, we would suggest considering a period of Work Experience once GCSE examinations have been completed. The deadline for all paperwork is Monday 4 March 2019. If this option is of interest, please speak with Miss Emmerson.

**N.B.: All students undertake a period of Work Experience at the beginning of Year 13.**

## How can students arrange a placement?

With the help and support of the school, family and friends, students should be able to find a meaningful placement, whether that is for one or two days, or up to five days. Miss Emmerson and Mr Fish are in school to help.

There are Work Experience Drop-In Sessions every Thursday after-school in N15, from 3.15pm to 5.30pm. Miss Emmerson is also available at breaktimes, lunchtimes and after school in the Careers Office in the LRC.

Students: Please take responsibility for your placement and do not rely on your parents to organise the placement for you. Mum or dad may have contacts, but you should be the one writing letters, emailing or speaking to employers! Employers do not appreciate mum or dad doing all of the work; you may be rejected!

**It is really important that students contact an employer giving reasons why they would like to complete work experience with their chosen organisation.**

**Professionalism is key:** There is an example of a speculative

letter and CV at the end of this booklet, as well as advice on how to use email effectively. There are also examples in the Work Experience section of [thorpecareersportal.info](http://thorpecareersportal.info).

There are no fixed rules about the way to organise a placement. Students last year sorted out their placements in a number of different ways:

**Posting or emailing letters to potential employers, including CVs**

**Asking staff directly, giving them a copy of a letter and CV**

We think that students who take the time to create a CV and letter stand a better chance of getting a placement. This is the professional approach.

Before students send a letter or email, it is really important that they address these with the **correct contact name**. This eliminates the possibility of a letter or email going to the 'wrong' person.

Please do take particular care with **spelling, punctuation and grammar**. Employers will not look favourably upon applications that are poorly constructed. We have been

told that they have rejected students in the past because of a lack of care and attention. Ask someone to **proofread** any writing.

**Interviews:** Some students will be asked to attend an interview. Some of these may take place in a formal setting; some informal, by way of a look around the premises, introduction to other workers, followed by a chat with the person who will be responsible for the student while on placement. Take time to prepare for interviews. We have some further advice in this booklet.

**Success:** Once students get a firm offer – either in writing or verbally – students should send a copy of the Placement Insurance Form (enclosed in this pack) to their employer. We then ask employers to complete and return them to Miss Emmerson at school. These instructions are printed on the insurance form.

We also ask for the Consent Form to be completed by Parents/ Guardians and returned to the school.

## Where could students go?

Students can apply to organisations in **Norfolk and Suffolk**. Regrettably, the school cannot support placements that might take place outside of these counties, nor outside of the UK.

Think about your travel arrangements before you start contacting employers. Would you be able to get to the organisation?

Take a look at [google.co.uk/maps](http://google.co.uk/maps) or [traveline.info](http://traveline.info) which are websites that allow users to plan journeys using public transport should students not be able to rely on family, friends, your own bike or feet!

## Pros about Self-Generating Placements

- Students have the total freedom to choose where they want to go for their placement, having given some thought as to the purpose and aims of their placement.
- Students who self-generate tend to have a better time because after all the hard work getting the placement, it is a real sense of achievement and they have a sense of ownership of their placement!

## Cons about Self-Generation

- Students might not get the placement they want because the organisation does not do Work Experience.
- Students might have to send several letters, emails, CVs; make many telephone calls or visit lots of places in order to get the placement they want.
- It can be disappointing if students do not hear from an employer having sent an email or letter to them. Our advice is to make a follow-up telephone call to clarify if the employer received the email or letter.

## Not sure what to do as a future career?

### Want some help matching your skills and interests with possible careers?

Not everyone in Year 10 will have an idea of what they want to do after they leave school or college. That is ok!

There are some online activities that students can do to match their skills and interests with potential careers, and these activities might provide some Work Experience ideas.

Take a look at [thorpecareersportal.info/tools-for-careers-research](http://thorpecareersportal.info/tools-for-careers-research).



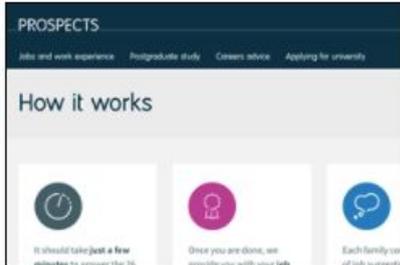
CAREER-TEST.CO.UK  
WHICH CAREER SUITS YOUR PERSONALITY?

Take Test

I like to make a sacrifice in the present when I can see that it will  
 I truly enjoy living in the present moment.

This Careers Test sets questions and assesses your responses in relation to the Briggs Meyer Personality Types.

Users will need to enter an email address in order to view the results.



PROSPECTS  
Info and work experience Postgraduate study Careers advice Applying for universities

How it works

It should take just a few minutes to complete the test. Once you are done, we will send you your job family. Each family one of jobs research.

From the graduate Prospects website:  
Which of our job families do you belong to?

Our job families provide information about your skills and interests in the workplace and offer recommendations on what job would suit you from over 400 job profiles.

## Further Help and Advice

Contact:

Miss Emmerson  
Pathways Guidance Co-ordinator  
[careersadvice@yare-edu.org.uk](mailto:careersadvice@yare-edu.org.uk) 01603 497702  
Miss Emmerson's office is in the LRC on the North Site.

Mr Fish  
Careers Leader  
[careersadvice@yare-edu.org.uk](mailto:careersadvice@yare-edu.org.uk)  
N15

## Work Experience Drop-In Sessions

Thursdays in N15, 3.15pm to 5.30pm, with Mr Fish and Miss Emmerson

## A Student Guide for Contacting Employers

Your letter or email is the first point of contact between you and the employer, so you will need to impress them to make sure they look at your CV.

**1. Show them that you know about the organisation and have considered what you want to get out of your work placement.**

*'I see from the news that your company had very profitable pre-Christmas sales this year, and as I study Business at school, it would be very interesting to see how a local store competes with other stores locally and online. I am interested in Retail as a career*

*and so would enjoy observing a variety of departments both on the shop floor and behind the scenes.'*

*'I noticed on the Internet that your organisation offers apprenticeships to young people. Being an apprentice is something that has interested me for a while, particularly one as a ... I would prefer to learn and earn money at the same time. I would hope that after a successful period of work experience with your organisation, I would have been in a position to have shown you that I would have what it takes to be considered for such an*

*apprenticeship.'*

**2. Aim to come across as motivated and focused, but make sure your goals are realistic.**

*'I am enthusiastic about a career in ... and know that a period of work experience involving ... would be beneficial. I understand that to get on my next course, I will need ... and I am working hard to achieve these grades. My teachers tell me that I'm on target to do well. I think that completing a successful work placement with your organisation would help me with my career plan.*

### More Advice ...

When writing a letter of application or sending an email enquiring about Work Experience placements, try to follow these basic guidelines:

**Write clearly, stating exactly what you want; do not waffle.**

Write in paragraphs.

**Draft your letter or email in rough first.**

Employers usually prefer a typed letter no longer than one side of A4.

**Check spelling, punctuation and grammar; ask someone to proofread your letters, emails and CVs.**

When printing, never use paper with holes down the side – it looks cheap!

**Say why you would like to do Work Experience with the organisation; state the skills and interests that you have that would make you the best person for the placement! Why should they choose you? Do not be big-headed though!**

If sending a letter, write your name below your signature.

**Avoid slang names: this applies to the email address that you use as well. Unprofessional email addresses are not well-received.**

Avoid contractions such as 'I'm', 'don't', 'can't' or 'won't'; write the full versions 'I am', 'do not', 'cannot' and 'will not'.

**Never use text language.**

Make sure you know the name, job title (and full address, including the postcode – if

writing a letter), of who and where you're writing to, otherwise your letter could be lost.

**Letters should be folded into three, put into a clean envelope and posted using the correct name, job title and address; make sure you use a stamp – employers won't want to pay for your letter.**

Always telephone the organisation to find out who you should send a letter/ email to. Get the person's job title and address of the organisation.

**Remember no two letters/ emails should be the same. If you are applying to several organisations, each of your letters/ emails should be tailored to the individual organisations.**

## An Example of a Speculative Letter

This sample letter can be altered to suit you and then posted.

Check out [thorpecareersportal.info/work-experience/](http://thorpecareersportal.info/work-experience/) to download a Word version.

Mr John Travis  
12 Davey Road  
Norwich  
NR4 3DF

**You can decide whether to include your home and mobile number, and email address** → 01603 498890  
07770 542443  
jtravis@bsinterweb.co.uk

Mrs J Edwards  
Personnel Manager ← **Do make sure you have the correct name, job title and full address**  
W Stores  
Bloomberg St  
Norwich  
NR1 3DR

Monday 26 March 2018

Dear Mrs Edwards,

I am currently a student in year 10 at Thorpe St Andrew School and Sixth Form and I have been given the opportunity to organise my own Work Experience placement between Monday 22 October to Friday 26 October 2018. I am writing to you to ask if it would be possible for me to join W Stores for four days from Monday 22 October to Thursday 25 October.

**State why you'd like to do your placement there.**

**Show the organisation that you know something about it. Perhaps take a look at the organisation's website and make a comment related to the experience you are hoping to have.**

**Could you relate a placement to a future career, or school project?**

I would like to do a placement with W Stores as I have an interest in retail and study GCSE Business Studies. I see from the news that your company had very profitable pre-Christmas sales this year, and as I study Business at school, it would be very interesting to see how a local store competes with other stores locally and online. I am interested in Retail as a career and so would enjoy observing a variety of departments both on the shop floor and behind the scenes.

I have enclosed a copy of my CV.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

*J Travis* ← **Sign this with a pen**

**Mr J Travis**

## An Example of a Speculative Email

This sample email can be altered to suit you and then emailed, with your CV as an attachment using the 'paperclip' symbol.

*Check out [thorpecareersportal.info/work-experience](http://thorpecareersportal.info/work-experience) to download a Word version.*

NEW MESSAGE

To: jewards@norwich.wstores.co.uk

Subject: Enquiry regarding Work Experience - John Travis - Thorpe St Andrew School and Sixth Form

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Dear Mrs Edwards,

I am currently a student in year 10 at Thorpe St Andrew School and Sixth Form and I have been given the opportunity to organise my own Work Experience placement between Monday 22 October to Friday 26 October 2018. I am writing to you to ask if it would be possible for me to join W Stores for four days from Monday 22 October to Thursday 25 October.

I would like to do a placement with W Stores as I have an interest in retail and study GCSE Business Studies. I see from the news that your company had very profitable pre-Christmas sales this year, and as I study Business at school, it would be very interesting to see how a local store competes with other stores locally and online. I am interested in Retail as a career and so would enjoy observing a variety of departments both on the shop floor and behind the scenes.

I have attached a copy of my CV.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Mr J Travis

Mr John Travis  
12 Davey Road  
Norwich  
NR4 3DF

01603 498890  
07770 542443  
jtravis@bsinterweb.co.uk

## Writing a CV

Stick to **two sides maximum** and avoid overlapping a section where possible. If you want to get the job you are after, you want your CV to stand out for the right reasons. Keep it easy to read and tidy looking ... it subliminally says a lot about you that you want them to think! Also think of the Seven Cs: How can you illustrate **confidence, curiosity, collaboration, communication, creativity, commitment** and **craftsmanship**?

The Tab key is a really useful key to help you create columns without creating tables.



### Alternatives to 'I am good at...':

- I am skilled at (or with)...
- Excelling at...
- I am exceptional at...
- I am competent in...
- With the ability to...
- I have a talent for...
- I am familiar with...
- I am adept at...
- I am qualified to (or in)...
- I am especially skilful at...

### Alternatives to 'I am interested in...':

enthusiasm, passion for, excited by, keen on, eager to learn about.

### Think about using some of these words to sell yourself in a letter, email or CV:

Able	Dependable	Keen	Reliable
Accurate	Determined	Loyal	Resourceful
Adaptable	Effective	Motivated	Responsible
Ambitious	Efficient	Outgoing	Thorough
Calm	Enthusiastic	Organised	Versatile
Capable	Flexible	Persistent	Willing
Confident	Hardworking	Practical	Competent
Honest	Punctual		

### Barclays' LifeSkills:

Whether you want to build up your self-confidence or you're not sure where to start with your CV, Barclays' LifeSkills can help you with the key skills you need to help you get where you want to be. They also provide an online CV Builder! It is really straightforward to use. You need to register to access the resources.

[barclayslifeskills.com](http://barclayslifeskills.com)



Name: Mr John Luke Travis  
Date of Birth: 12 February 1993  
Age: 15  
Address: 12 Davey Road  
Norwich  
NR4 3DF  
Home: 01603 498890  
Mobile: 07770 542443  
Email: jtravis@bsinterweb.co.uk

### Key Skills

- Noted ability to work well with others, including customers, and have had leadership experiences
  - Experience of using Microsoft Office software: Word, Excel and PowerPoint
- [Even better if you can give real examples of when you have been able to demonstrate your skills.]*

### Education and Qualifications

2012 - present Thorpe St Andrew School and Sixth Form,  
Laundry Lane, Norwich, NR7 0XS

#### GCSEs (Current Level of Performance)

English Language	C	History	B
English Literature	B	PE	C
Mathematics	A	Catering	C
Science Additional	B		

#### GCSEs (June 2014)

Science Core	B	Ethics	C
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2016 St John Ambulance, Norwich - First Aid Qualification

2017 Associated Board of Music - Piano, Grade 5

### Work Experience

2015 – present JT's Newsagent, Borrofield Road, Norwich, NR4 4DE  
General Assistant  
Responsible for helping customers, stocking shelves and checking current stock

### Hobbies and Interests

I enjoy listening to a music, ...

*[Think about what your hobbies say about you. 'Enjoys socialising' can sound like an outgoing person but also like one who is always out with their friends! Emphasise the personal skills you have acquired doing that hobby, i.e. rock climbing means you can talk about keeping fit, but also the concentration involved and determination to reach goals set. Include dates of how long you have been doing a hobby and any qualifications obtained. Think of the w-words: what, where, when, who, why. Give examples.]*

### Referees

Mr G Jones  
Sixth Form Tutor  
Thorpe St Andrew School and Sixth Form  
Laundry Lane  
Norwich  
NR7 0XS

Ms J Garrett  
Piano Teacher  
45 Wensum Drive  
Norwich  
NR3 2DT

*[Do everything you can to make your CV readable and that it maintains the employer's interest. Give them the truth but in an attractively-written way but which leaves plenty for you to add to in the interview.]*

## **Students: So you have an interview?**

First impressions count, so attend the interview on time and appropriately dressed – smart clothes, no jeans. Guys – you do not have to wear a suit; a shirt and tie with trousers will be fine. Girls – something comfortable and smart will do just fine. No trainers and if shoes can cope with polish, use it.

Be prepared to talk. A simple yes or no to a question will not do. The interviewer wishes to obtain information from you, sometimes of a factual nature and sometimes in order to know your views and simply answering questions with yes or no will not help him or her form an impression of you. The interviewer might ask you about your ambitions, or hobbies and interests, and any other work experience you've had. He/she will certainly ask you about why you want to work with their organisation. The interviewer will refer to what you have written in your letter, email or CV.

Answer questions fully but briefly. Almost as bad as giving yes or no answers to questions is to ramble on aimlessly. Speak clearly. Do not mumble or speak so quietly the interviewer cannot hear you.

Refer to the interviewer by name – this is polite (make sure you catch the name when you are introduced). Smile occasionally and try to appear cheerful – no-one wants to take on a miserable person!

Look at the interviewer and not at the floor or the ceiling. If there are several people interviewing look at the person asking the question but occasionally glance at the other members of the panel.

Answer questions honestly. If you do not understand a question say so and ask if it could be put another way – the interviewer will not mind doing this. Take a moment to think about questions – this demonstrates that you are taking the questions seriously.

At the end of the interview thank the interviewer for seeing you.

## **Worried about telephoning employers?**

This can be really daunting at first, but as long as you are prepared, you should do fine. Keep calm.

Make sure you have the right number – check directory enquiries or the organisation's website. If you are worried about calling and you ring the wrong number, it may dent your confidence; so get it right first time!

Saying that, it is important that you take care with telephone calls – your interview may begin the moment you are through to the Personnel Department!

Before you ring, make a note of all the points you wish to bring up, and have a pencil and piece of paper handy so that you can make notes – particularly if you're ringing about a name or an address.

Speak clearly and try not to sound timid or over confident.

Ensure that you're put through to the right person. If you do not know the name of the person you need to speak to, ask to be put through to the Personnel Department and then make it clear you are phoning about Work Experience.

If you do not know the area in which the organisation is located ask how to get there – you will immediately create a bad impression if you arrive late for an interview.

Be polite throughout the telephone conversation – at this stage the employer has nothing to go on but the way you sound.

Always thank the employer for speaking with you.

## **Space for your Notes**

Have any initial ideas about where you might like to go and who you could contact?